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Beowulf nebst dem Finnsburg-Bruchstück, mit Einleitung, Glossar und Anmerkungen herausgegeben von F. Holthausen. I Teil: Texte und Namenverzeichniss. II Teil: Einleitung, Glossar und Anmerkungen. Heidelberg, 1906.

These volumes, which form the third number in the series of **Early English Texts edited by Morsbach and Holthausen,** will be welcomed by all who are interested in the textual criticism and interpretation of Beowulf. The need of an annotated edition of the poem, presenting the more important results of recent investigation, with copious bibliographical references, has been evident for some years,—a lack which has only been partly supplied by the successive republications of the Heyne-Socin text. Whether the present work is better suited than some previous editions for class-room work remains to be seen,—for those whose mother-tongue is English the convenient text of Wyatt will hardly be displaced immediately. But Professor Holthausen's volumes contain a mass of material which no careful student can afford to neglect, no matter what edition he may be using, and they offer to the investigator, in systematised and convenient form, many notes and much bibliography which must otherwise have been scattered about in manuscript form.

The most striking innovation in the text is the method of indicating the quantity of the diphthongs. In accordance with a suggestion made by Bülbring (*Anglia Beib.* 14, 1, p. 2), the short diphthongs have been marked (*ēo*), while the long diphthongs bear no indication of quantity save when they are to be counted metrically as dissyllabic. The wisdom of this arrangement is certainly questionable. In the first place, diphthongs which are to be reckoned as two syllables are of comparatively rare occurrence, and it seems hardly worth while to upset the whole present system in favor of these isolated forms. The first 500 lines of the poem contain only one such, if a hasty examination may be trusted, *geþēon* 25. It seems inconsistent, too, to register long diphthongs in the same way as short vowels, and dissyllabic diphthongs in the same way as long vowels. The student must also distinguish the treatment of such a word as *geōmor*, in which the macron on the second vowel indicates its length, the *e* show-

ing the quality of the consonant. Cases of this sort do not occur with great frequency, however. The practical advantages of upsetting the usual system of marking ordinary long and short diphthongs are hardly apparent. Doubtless it would be well to indicate the true character of such contracted forms as *tēon, flēon, þēon*, etc., but it seems as if some distinguishing mark should be added to those forms alone, other diphthongs being left as they are. The method in the present text does not provide for such dissyllabic forms as *dōn=dōan*, cf. note to 1134, in which the reading *swā nū-gȳt d ō[a]f* is proposed. Unfavorable comment has already followed the application of this system in two studies published under the direction of Professor Holthausen. (Cf. review by R. Jordan, *Anglia Beib.* 18, 2). The original suggestion in Bülbring's article was hardly put forward, apparently, with any idea that it would be adopted.

The metrical researches of Sievers have been carefully considered in establishing the text. The number of syllables in the half-line is frequently reduced, this being indicated by placing a dot beneath the suppressed vowel, as *magen, fyrena.* In many cases the usage cannot be definitely determined (cf. Sievers, *Altgerm. Metrik,* §79), but the editor's general tendency appears to be to employ this sign rather freely, as in the syncopation of a middle syllable after a short vowel, as *niceras* 422, 475, *nicera* 845, the MS. having *nicra* 1425. The same sign is also used to indicate transitional *e* after palatals as *sēcean, þyncean*, and is further extended to denote complete deletion of a letter for any reason, as = *secg-hete* + *ecg-hete* 84.

A glance at the " Verbesserungen und Nachträge " at the end of Vol. II shows that a second and revised edition of the text will incorporate a good many changes, especially in matters of detail. The editor frankly acknowledges that he has often changed his mind in regard to doubtful passages. Many of these alterations are also suggested in the notes. One rather striking feature of the text, the assumption of numerous lacunae, indicated by dotted lines, is partly nullified by the corrections in the second volume. For example, the first 2,000 lines as printed contain 22 gaps, but 15 of these are struck out in the revision, thus leaving only 7. In order to make the transitions easier, changes in the readings are often suggested. A discussion of

these readings, as of those occurring in the poem generally, lies outside the province of a brief review. The editor has not hesitated to depart from the standard texts of Grein-Wülker or Heyne-Socin when he has thought it best to do so. The evidence afforded by the manuscript, as recorded in the Zupitza fac-simile, has apparently influenced him more in doubtful cases than conjectural emendations of an ingenious but questionable character. The difficulty of establishing a satisfactory text, with due regard to all recent work, is certainly very great, and it is inevitable that many alterations should seem advisable in issuing the second volume. It is surely wiser not to assume too many lacunae, especially now that it is more generally conceded than it used to be that the expression of thought in Anglo-Saxon poetry is frequently disconnected and inconsequent.

The Finnsburg Fragment, and an interesting attempt to restore the first 52 lines of *Bēowulf* in the original Northumbrian dialect form a supplement to the first volume. An Index of Proper Names follows, which serves mainly to locate persons and places as they occur in the poem, only the briefest information, a word or two, being given by way of explanation. While a somewhat more detailed treatment would occasionally be useful, the plan adopted is more in accord with the general principles of the series than the elaborate comments of the Heyne-Socin text would be. The effort has evidently been made to condense the work as much as possible, a method which has much to commend it.

This striving for compression is still more noticeable throughout the second volume. Bibliographical references are generally made to serve instead of extended explanations, and much is suggested in a few terse phrases. The size of the volume is materially reduced in this way, and the *apparatus criticus* made less formidable. The introduction consists of selected references covering editions, criticisms of the text, discussions of the language and style, and translations. Many students will wish that the editor had expanded the single page in which he sums up the origin, composition, sources, and contents of the poem. A great deal of interesting light has been thrown on these questions in the past few years, and most readers can hardly be expected to search through the mass of criticism, most of which has

appeared in periodical form, for the sake of keeping their information up to date. A very short résumé of the arguments for the essentially Scandinavian origin of the poem, which has won wide acceptance in the past twenty years, would be exceedingly convenient. This would be all the more useful as there appears to be no one place to which students can be referred for an impartial presentation of the case as it now stands. Professor Holthausen rightly rejects the attempts to separate the epic into its component parts made by ten Brink, Müllenhoff, and others, and believes that its present form is chiefly to be attributed to a single poet.

The glossary seems admirably done. Each occurrence of all save the commonest words is registered by line-number, but the definitions are made as compact as possible. The arrangement is strictly alphabetical, *æ* following *ad*, and ð or þ following *t*. There is no such needless and tiresome separation of long and short vowels and diphthongs as in the Heyne-Socin text. On the whole, the plan of giving only the briefest definition of a word, and reserving the explanation of special passages for the notes, seems a good one. The notes themselves are, as has already been noted, largly bibliographical, and very valuable for their careful consideration of recent investigations. In a few instances some space is given to important citations from such chroniclers as Saxo or Gregory of Tours. In view of the compression of the glossary, one is again moved to wish now and then that the editor had allowed himself more detailed explanations here, or given in a few words the purport of a reference not immediately obtainable. But it seems ill-natured to find fault where so much has been suggestively indicated in a brief space. The editor's own comments and his treatment of the material at his disposal show sound common-sense, a quality which does not always accompany critical acumen. In disputed passages, he is careful to indicate where evidence on both sides of the question may be obtained, but he has surely acted wisely in showing, as he generally does, what he himself believes to be the correct interpretation. The fact that one sometimes dissents from his conclusions is no reflection upon his work, since nothing short of the millenium will ever bring complete accord in regard to the interpretation of *Bēowulf*.

Altogether, this new edition is one upon which Professor Holthausen may be cordially congratulated. It should appeal to a wide circle of students in various countries. A new and revised edition will certainly be welcome in a short time,—an edition representing not only the correction of certain errors and inconsistencies sure to creep into a first draft, but also embodying the results of some of the many friendly criticisms which such a book as this is sure to call forth. The difficulties and the labor which attend the preparation of an edition of *Bēowulf* are probably not fully realized by most readers. Surely, hearty encouragement should attend so creditable a performance of the task.

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Beowulf nebst dem Finnsburg-Bruchstück, übersetzt und erläutert von Hugo Gering. Heidelberg, 1906.

This little book forms a fitting companion-piece to Holthausen's edition of *Bēowulf,* reviewed above. The translator has based his work upon the Holthausen text, allowing himself liberties here and there, but without entering into discussions of variant readings, so unimportant and uninteresting to the general reader. While not primarily intended for the use of scholars, the book is one which they may be glad to add to their libraries. The name of Professor Gering is a sufficient assurance of the general excellence of the work. Students of early Germanic poetry are already indebted to him for a translation of the Poetic Edda into German verse, with a convenient introduction and useful notes. In the present volume, his familiarity with the Northern material which has so close a connection with *Bēowulf* appears in the admirable annotations, some of which may be new even to those who are fairly well acquainted with Anglo-Saxon literature. These notes, with a brief introduction, give the general reader all that is necessary for an intelligent comprehension of the main facts in regard to the poem.

The experiments which have been made in rendering *Bēowulf*